

VZCZCXRO0291
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2933/01 2550610

ZNY SSSS ZZH
O 110610Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9355
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFIA/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFIA/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002933

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/08/2018

TAGS: MOPS MARR MASS PREL PTER I2

SUBJECT: NSC SEPTEMBER 7: STEMMING ASSASSINATIONS AND COORDINATING RECONSTRUCTION

REF: BAGHDAD 02860

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S/REL MCFI) Summary: Deputy Prime Minister Rafi Isawi chaired the sparsely attended September 7 meeting of the Iraqi National Security Council (I-NSC). The Council considered plans to tackle the rising number of assassinations in Baghdad, reconstruction coordination, and the achievements of the I-NSC in its first 100 meetings. The National Security Advisor's (NSA) office presented a proposal to fund a TV program modeled on "America's Most Wanted", which did not garner support. Due to the absence of the PM and Ministers of Interior, Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Justice, several agenda items were deferred. End Summary.

Diyala and Oil Police Follow-up

¶2. (S/REL MCFI) D/PM Isawi informed the Council that the Ministry of Water Resources had indicated its willingness and preparedness to drill more water wells in Diyala, and requested specific information for placing the wells. The D/PM said he had asked Diyala's Governor to specify the locations for the new wells and awaited his reply to have the Ministry of Water Resources proceed.

¶3. (S/REL MCFI) Due to the absence of the Ministers of Interior, Oil, and Finance, Isawi deferred action on the issue of support for the Oil Police in the Ministry of Interior (reftel) until next week.

Assassinations Follow-up

¶4. (S/REL MCFI) Minister of Defense (MOD) Abdul Qadr stated that the commander of the Baghdad Operations Center (BOC) had developed a plan for the better integration of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and intelligence services to stop assassinations in Baghdad. He noted that the intelligence officers must have freedom of movement through ISF checkpoints. He also noted that this problem of assassinations must be resolved before elections could take place. The Minister of State for National Security Affairs, Shirwan Wa'eli, noted that the numbers of assassinations in Baghdad last week was 43, up from 21 the week before. D/PM Isawi recommended that the BOC Commander, General Abud, be invited to give an update at the next session of the I-NSC and brief his plan for coordination between the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Iraq's intelligence agencies.

Shifting to Police from Army

¶5. (S/REL MCFI) NSA Dr. Muwaffaq Rubaie shifted the conversation to a general question of when the police would be ready to take over security from the Iraqi Army (IA) in Baghdad. In responding to Rubaie's earlier question, Abdul

Qadr said that MNF-I and the Iraqi Army (IA) could not just pull out yet; the MOI was not ready, he asserted. MOD then tried to bring the conversation back to the coordination of ISF and intelligence services, noting that the services needed to have liaison officers at the BOC. He also noted that coordination of station police, National Police, and IA units in Baghdad was still needed.

¶ 6. (S/REL MCFI) Commanding General of MNF-I General David Petraeus noted that he understood entirely the desire of Iraqi leaders to gradually reduce the number of soldiers on the streets and replace them with police and National Police. He offered that MNF-I was doing all it could to make the transition a reality, but he added that he shared the reservations of the Minister of Defense. He noted that it had taken over a year to get a handle on the security situation, adding that we don't want to lose those gains by shifting too rapidly from Coalition and Iraqi soldiers to local police. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) is trying to come back and the new Special Groups and Kata'ib Hizballah are trying to establish a presence, he added, counseling caution in reducing IA forces and reminding the I-NSC that they would need Iraqi forces to replace U.S. units. Petraeus argued that if you push out the Coalition and the IA, then he was afraid that the security situation would not be maintained. The NSA commented that the GOI was not pushing the Coalition out of Iraq, and, in response, GEN Petraeus reiterated his point that as Coalition forces thin out and move out of cities and towns, as they had done in 14 of Iraq's 18 provinces, the IA will be relied upon more for security - the transition to police taking the lead for security should be accomplished carefully as conditions allow, not according to

BAGHDAD 00002933 002 OF 002

an arbitrary timetable.

Rebuilding Requires Coordination

¶ 7. (S/REL MCFI) The MOD raised the ongoing difficulties in rebuilding Basra, Mosul, and Baghdad's Sadr City and Shula districts. He suggested that the GOI create Civilian-Military Operations Center (CMOCs) to coordinate the reconstruction in those places as the MNF-I had done in Fallujah. GEN Petraeus responded that the MNF-I CMOC in the southern neighborhoods of Sadr City had completed \$80M worth of projects, more than the GOI had completed in the remainder of Sadr City. GEN Petraeus emphasized that the CMOC had worked in Fallujah because it was a product of Coalition leadership and money with Iraqi help. He acknowledged that the GOI under the leadership of its two Deputy Prime Ministers (Barham Salih and Rafi Isawi) had accomplished much, but more needed to be done, and done by the GOI with its own money.

¶ 8. (S/REL MCFI) D/PM Salih shook his head and lamented the failure of the GOI in Sadr City and the provinces. He stated that people do not see reconstruction results on the ground and that security will not be permanent without those results. The NSA called for one person or agency to coordinate reconstruction at the national level. D/PM Isawi blamed the problem on lack of coordination, and noted that without the PM at the Council meeting, it was difficult to move forward. He also noted the importance of consultations with local district or Provincial Councils when implementing reconstruction projects.

¶ 9. (S/REL MCFI) Several minutes of finger-pointing ensued, ended by D/PM Salih's asking GEN Petraeus if MNF-I was ready to help. GEN Petraeus replied, "Absolutely." He said that he would be happy to help those from the Iraqi side form CMOC, but that field commanders had to be given authority to spend money. He noted that his commanders could spend Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds of up to two million dollars that needed only the Corps Commander's approval, not his. NSA asked if this also meant using the

Iraqi-funded CERP, or I-CERP, program. GEN Petraeus indicated that this would be a very good way for the MNF-I to help get reconstruction moving, but suggested the Minister of Finance was not very forthcoming with funds. There then followed some general discussion of limiting the autonomy of field commanders in making project grants, with the NSA suggesting that the Emergency Services Committee (ESC) be re-animated; conversation on this topic ended without resolution.

I-NSC Implements 90 Percent of Its Decisions

¶10. (S/REL MCFI) The NSA then presented a list of 100 major decisions taken by the I-NSC, noting that only 10 had not been implemented. He said that his staff was examining the ten not yet implemented to draw lessons learned; staff would do the same with the 90 successfully implemented also, he added.

Iraq's Most Wanted: Not Ready for Prime Time

¶11. (S/REL MCFI) The NSA's office briefed the Council on the concept of producing a program modeled on "American's Most Wanted" to enhance the chances of catching criminals and terrorists and to raise popular awareness. Several Ministers, prominently the MOD and the MSNSA, objected to the proposal, citing the possibility that this program risked revealing sources or methods to wanted terrorists and would alert them that they were considered high-value targets, thus undermining efforts by security services to apprehend them. MSNSA added that the program would also turn this into a political issue; the MOD concurred. GEN Petraeus agreed with the Ministers while also noting the presentation's good intent and concept. He noted that although programs like this around the world had been well-received, "Iraq is not the world." He stated that it was not time yet for such a program in Iraq. The NSA took the points, indicating to his briefer and aide to drop the project for now.

CROCKER